

Factors Influencing the Rural Women to Purchase Fast Moving Consumer Goods in Cuddalore District: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

The rapid changes in the socio-economic and political environment contributed to a large extent for change in the life styles of rural people who desired branded fast moving consumer goods. The policies of the government to endorse education in rural areas have enhanced brand awareness of Indian rural consumers. A thorough understanding of rural women consumer behaviour would help in identifying different market segments and to evolve suitable marketing strategies for effectively penetrating and thereby to command a respectable share in rural markets. In this backdrop, this study is undertaken by the researcher to find out the factors that influence the rural women to purchase fast moving consumer goods in Cuddalore district. The study is confined to consumer behaviour of rural women in Cuddalore district. By adopting multi-stage sampling 600 rural women were selected for the present study. As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected from 600 rural women with the help of schedule. Taking into consideration the objectives of the study, a schedule was constructed based on Likert scaling technique. Pre-testing of schedule was done during December 2014, involving 25 rural women to know the relevance of the questions. In the light of pre-testing, necessary changes were incorporated in the revised schedule. In analyzing data, statistical tools such as student t test, analysis of one-way variance, analysis of co-efficient of variation, discriminant function analysis, multiple regression analysis and percentage analysis have been employed. The study reveals that no significant relationship is found among the acceptance levels of the rural women consumers of different age groups, educational status groups, occupations, monthly household income groups and blocks towards factors influence to purchase fast moving consumer goods. On the other hand, a significant difference is found between the acceptance level of the respondents of family and joint family towards factors influence to purchase fast moving consumer goods.

Keywords: Rural women, consumer behaviour, rural market, fast moving consumer, etc.

Introduction

A huge proportion of India's population lives in rural village. In recent years, rural market has acquired significance in India, as its overall growth of the economy has resulted into substantial increase in the purchasing power of the rural communities. On account of the green revolution, the rural areas are consuming a large quantity of consumer goods. Besides, rural marketing is getting importance because of the saturation of the urban markets. Therefore, the marketers are looking for extending their product categories to the rural market. As a result of increasing literacy level and media explosion, people are becoming conscious about their lifestyles and about their rights to live a better life. Rural India with its traditional perception has grown over the years, not only in terms of

income, but also in terms of thinking. For quite some time now, the lure of rural India has been the subject of animated discussion in corporate suites.

Statement of the Problem

As the rural marketing has become the latest marketing mantras for most of the FMCG companies because the true rural India is vast with unlimited opportunities. To gain competitive advantages, comprehensive marketing plans, programs and actions are directed towards the rural market with best match of their rural consumer for integrating in their life based on the rural marketing mix. A thorough understanding of rural women consumer behaviour would help in identifying different market segments and to evolve suitable marketing strategies for effectively penetrating and thereby to command a respectable share in rural markets. In this backdrop, this study is undertaken by the researchers to find out the factors that influence the rural women to purchase fast moving consumer goods in Cuddalore district.

Objectives of the Study

The following are objectives of the present study:

1. To find out the factors influencing rural women consumers to purchase fast moving consumer goods in Cuddalore district.
2. To suggest suitable measures for the effective purchase decision of fast moving consumer goods by the rural women based on the findings of the study.

Testing of Hypothesis

In order to find out the factors that influence the rural women to purchase fast moving consumer goods, the following null hypothesis was formulated and tested. H_0 : There socio-economic profiles of the rural women consumers will not have any influence on their acceptance level towards factors influencing to purchase fast moving consumer goods.

Sampling Design

The study is confined to consumer behaviour of rural women in Cuddalore district. There are 13 blocks in Cuddalore district as on December 31, 2014. In order to collect primary data for the purpose of the study, multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. At the first stage, top 5 blocks which outnumber in population were selected out of the 13 blocks of Cuddalore district. In the second stage, by adopting simple random sampling, from each block, 10 per cent of the villages i.e. 30 were selected out of the 5 selected blocks. In the final stage, from each of the village, 20 rural woman consumers were selected on the purposive basis for the study. Therefore, the sample size consists of 600 rural women. The following table shows the sampling distribution of the study.

Tools for Data Collection

This study is empirical in nature, based on survey method. As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected from 600 rural women with the help of schedule. Taking into consideration the objectives of the study, a schedule was constructed based on Likert scaling technique. Pre-testing of schedule was done during December 2014, involving 25 rural women to know the relevance of the questions. In the light of pre-testing, necessary changes were incorporated in the revised schedule. The secondary data were collected mainly from journals, magazines, books and unpublished dissertations.

Framework of Analysis

In analyzing data, statistical tools such as student t test, analysis of one-way variance, analysis of co-efficient of variation, discriminant function analysis, multiple regression analysis and percentage analysis have been employed.

Findings

1. No significant relationship is found among the acceptance levels of the rural women consumers of different age groups, educational status groups, occupations, monthly household income groups and blocks towards factors influence to purchase fast moving consumer goods. On the other hand, a significant difference is found between the acceptance level of the respondents of family and joint family towards factors influence to purchase fast moving consumer goods.
2. Respondents in the age group above 50 years, respondents belonging to degree qualification, employed consumers; respondents belonging to monthly household income above Rs.20000, respondents belonging to Kumaratchi block and respondents of joint family have higher acceptance level towards factors influence to purchase fast moving consumer goods.
3. A consistency is found among the acceptance levels of the sample rural women consumers in the age group above 50 years, respondents who have H.Sc qualification, employed consumers, respondents having the monthly household income Rs.10001-15000, sample consumers belonging to Keerapalayam block and respondents of joint family towards factors influence to purchase fast moving consumer goods.
4. The result of the discriminant function analysis reveals that range of variety is the maximum discriminating factor ($R^2=14.44\%$) between nuclear family and joint family, followed by convenience (9.42%), promotional scheme (9.12%) in that order. "Availability" contributes least (1.23%) in discriminating between nuclear family and joint family respondents in the level of acceptance on the factors which influence them to purchase the fast moving consumer goods.
5. The correlation between the personal variables and acceptance with the factors influence to purchase fast moving consumer goods is (0.049) moderate. The R square indicates that 30.90 per cent of variation in acceptance towards factors influence to purchase fast moving consumer goods is explained by each personal variables taken collectively. The F value indicates that the multiple correlation coefficients are not significant. Age, educational status, monthly household income and family pattern have no significant effect on the respondents' acceptance with the factors influence to purchase fast moving consumer goods.
6. Majority of the respondents report that they disagree (36.33%) with the various factors influencing to purchase fast moving consumer goods, followed closely by strongly (19.33%) and agree (19.17%). 18.33% and 6.33% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree and strongly disagree respectively towards factors influencing them to fast moving consumer goods. The mean acceptance score reveals that the sample rural women have a higher acceptance level (3.16) towards availability, followed by the household income (3.13), and quality (3.12). However, the respondents have a lower acceptance score towards size and quantity (2.97).

Suggestions

1. Rural women are more concerned about concessions in the price, cash discounts, gifts, free home delivery, coupons, etc. of the fast moving consumer goods. Therefore, the marketers shall offer necessary promotional measures to the rural women for the purchase of fast moving consumer goods in Cuddalore district.

2. The marketers of the fast moving consumer goods can create awareness about the offering among the rural women in a number of ways. Persuasive advertisements can play a significant role in changing the psychographic of rural women. More sophisticated use of advertising makes them aware of fast moving consumer goods and it will be beneficial in this context since the rural women consider brand reputation as one of the major motivators behind their purchase.

3. Due to increased educational level, rural women consumers prefer well established brands of fast moving consumer goods. Therefore, the select fast moving consumer goods companies must try to convert the brand consciousness into brand loyalty for their well established brands. Consumer behaviour in this direction should be properly exploited by the manufacturers/marketers to maximize their sales.

4. The marketers would have to identify different lifestyles and socio-economic strata of the rural women and respond to their respective requirements. So as to satisfy the needs of the rural women, the marketers must have a thorough understanding of how rural women make purchase decision. Perceptual mapping of the rural women provides some valuable insights into the process and therefore is useful for decision making. For this purpose, the marketers shall update database at least for high-valued rural women who purchased fast moving consumer goods.

Conclusion

The market for fast moving consumer goods is becoming more competitive now days. Therefore, the manufacturer of fast moving consumer goods should understand consumer interest much to find higher sale of their products. The study of consumer behaviour is rapidly evolving as researchers recognize and implement new techniques to understand the nature of purchase and consumption behaviour. Women are vital part of buying behaviour and they are more involved with the purchasing activities. They are more price conscious, quality conscious and store loyal. Women are apt to be more involved with purchasing than men, since women have traditionally been the family purchasing agents and perceive purchasing as being associated with their role in the family. Thus, a marketer who understands the consumer behaviour of rural women and plans his marketing strategies to suit the needs and aspirations of this target market will definitely have an advantage over his competitors.

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